

REMARKS

Reconsideration is requested.

In the Office Action, claims 20-26 were objected to because of informalities. Claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lee et al. (US 6,223,420). Claims 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Lee in view of Gill (US 6,680,830). Claims 23-26 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By the present amendment, the specification has been amended to identify the patent number of parent application 09/922,446. Claim 19 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 21, which has been cancelled. Claim 22 has been amended to depend from claim 19 instead of cancelled claim 21, and claim 24 has been amended to depend from claim 19 instead of cancelled claim 13. Claims 20 and 22-26 have been amended to change “A method” to “The method.”

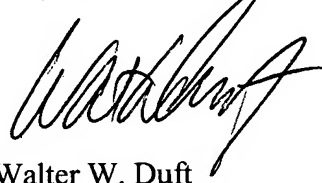
Turning to the claim objections based on informalities, claims 20 and 22-26 have been amended to overcome the “A method” objection. Claim 19 (which contains the limitations of objected to claim 21, now cancelled) has been amended to select a single term at each location where there was one term following by another term in parentheses. Claim 24 has been amended to correct its dependency.

Turning to the prior art rejections of claims 19-22, Applicants have amended claim 19 to incorporate the limitations of cancelled claim 21. In addition, claim 19 has been further amended to clarify that the partial free sub-layer is only a partial layer that is less thick than the ultimate thickness of the completed free layer of the sensor. An example of this partial free sub-layer is shown by reference numeral 103 in Applicants drawing figures. It is submitted that neither Lee

nor Gill disclose or suggest, alone or in combination, the formation of a free layer by first applying a partial free sub-layer.

Accordingly, it is believed that the rejections have been overcome. Notices of Allowance and allowability are therefore requested. A request for a one-month extension of time is enclosed herewith, together with the required fee.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter W. Duft', written in a cursive style.

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